

West Virginia WIC's "Learning for Health" Project

Lesson #10

A Little Help - Shopping and Cooking with Your Kids

In this session, participants will share their experiences and ideas for food shopping and cooking with their children. The focus will be on what and how young children learn from watching and helping their parents with these tasks (parents as role models). Discussion and printed materials will focus on ideas and tips to make shopping and food preparation positive and enjoyable for parent and children. Handout may have tips for shopping on one side and tips for cooking on the other.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, parents/caregivers will be able to:

1. Share a positive experience they've had with shopping or preparing food with their child.
2. Choose at least one strategy for shopping/food preparation with kids that they will try within the next 3 days.

Materials

- Lesson Plan Posters (2)
- Copies of Parent Fact Sheet (1 two-sided sheet)
- Easel, flip chart and colorful markers

Preparation

- Set up room in an informal way - chairs in a semi-circle if possible.
- Hang up the posters so all the group participants can see them easily OR you can attached the posters to an easel and show them at the appropriate time.

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and welcome everyone.
- Explain the purpose of the group and the estimated time.
- Have each group member share his or her name and share what kinds of experiences they have had when they shop or prepare food with their children.

Discussion Questions

Depending upon what the parents/caretakers share about their shopping or cooking experiences with kids, you can use the following content and questions.

We have to be super moms and dads every day! Even when it comes to grocery shopping. We try to make the best of it.

On a scale of 0-10 (0 = no stress, 10 = big stress) how would you “rate” your grocery shopping with kids?

What do you do to make the best of it when shopping with your kids?

You can record some of their thoughts on flipchart paper and use the following list of ideas to add to the discussion:

- Try to go grocery shopping when you and your child are NOT hungry.
- Try to go shopping after naptime.
- Plan your meals and make a list before you go to save time in the store.
- Use a safety belt when your child rides in the seat of the shopping cart.
- Bring toys or a picture book to keep your child busy.
- Set up clear rules of behavior (for example, no climbing out of the cart and no asking for candy), and **praise your child for following the rules.**
- Ask your child to help you look for foods items.
- Talk to your child about what you are buying - for example, “Can you find the oranges? Oranges are so good! Can you help me pick out 5 oranges? Can you help me put them in the bag? Great work!”
- If possible, do not rush you child. Children love to look around and talk about what they see.
- Try to use the “candy-free” check out if possible. If you go through a check out line with candy racks, try to stand between the cart and the rack and get your children interested in unloading your groceries onto the checkout counter.

Why would we want to cook with our kids?

Let parents share their thoughts. Here are some additional reasons:

- Cooking with your kids is a good way for them to learn about new foods.
- If kids help “make” easy foods, they are more likely to try them.
- They can learn from you.
- Something as simple as tearing lettuce for a salad or stirring pancake batter can help your child become familiar with new foods.
- As you prepare foods together, talk to your child about the color, shape, and texture of favorite foods.
- Helping you in the kitchen can help your child develop “readiness skills” such as vocabulary and language skills, understanding numbers and letters, and small muscle coordination.
- You can help your child learn by saying the names of foods, utensils, equipment and talking about what you are doing - chopping, mixing, stirring, baking, boiling...
- Your child will grow in self-confidence as they learn to help with a very grown-up thing - cooking!

What kinds of things can children do to help prepare food?

Here are simple things your preschool-aged child can do in the kitchen with your supervision:

- rinse and dry off fresh fruits and vegetables
- spread margarine or peanut butter on toast
- stir thawed concentrated juice and water
- fill a bowl with cereal for breakfast or a snack
- sprinkle grated cheese on a salad or pasta
- separate slices of sliced cheese to use on sandwiches
- open the lid of a small yogurt container
- Use a teaspoon or tablespoon to “measure” ingredients with your help
- Let children help you clean-up in the kitchen

What are some safety tips for kids in the kitchen?

Have group members share their ideas. Write these on the flipchart. Prompt the discussion with any of the following tips:

- Use back burners on the stove when cooking. Always place handles towards the back of the stove.
- If you heat food in the microwave, always test the temperature before you give it to your child to eat.
- Keep coffee, hot water, and other hot liquids out of your child’s reach. Do not have these things in your hand when you are holding your child. Don’t place them on the edge of the counter or table.

- Bring the ingredients, bowls, and tools to a table instead of a kitchen counter. This will make it easier and safer for your child to work.
- Always work together with you child in the kitchen.

Activity

- Demo a simple recipe with the group (have children help, if present) - from the Kinder Krunchies Cookbook.

Evaluation/Wrap-up

- Here is something that you might be interested in (hold up copy of fact sheet if not passed out already). It includes many of the things we talked about today.
- Who would like one? *(pass out to interested participants)*
- What is something new that you'll try?
- Thank them for coming to the group and participating. Let them know that they can call you or stop by for more information whenever they wish.

Additional Resources:

Kinder-Krunchies - Healthy Snack Recipes for Children by Karen Jenkins, 1982